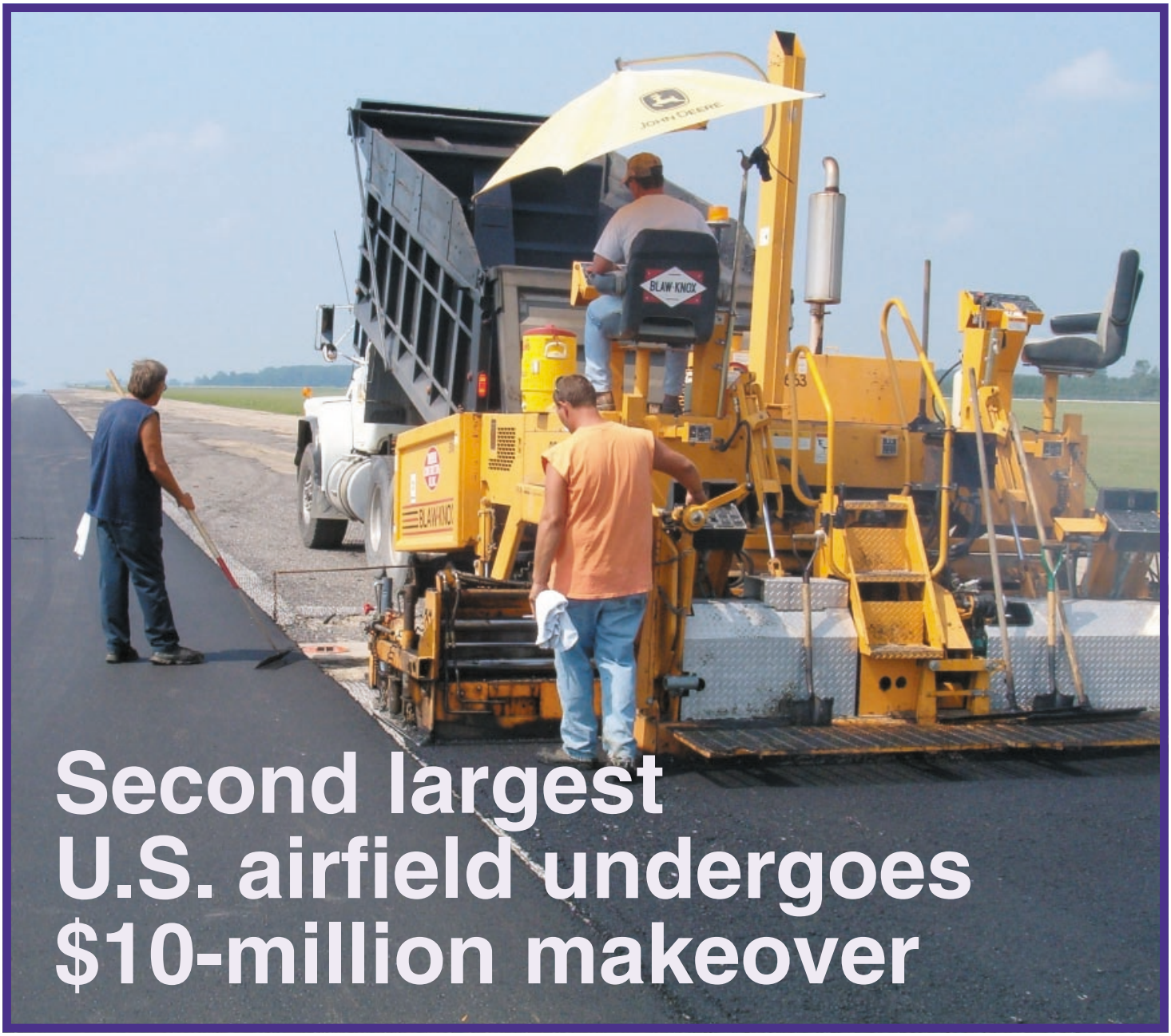
U.S. AIR FORCE

# CenterViews

Summer, 2005

*AIR FORCE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE • BROOKS CITY-BASE, TEXAS*




# Second largest U.S. airfield undergoes $10-million makeover

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# CENTERVIEWS



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COVER

Contractor employees work on a shoulder of the Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., airfield. The $10 million AFCEE project included also complete renovation of the runway's lighting and control systems. Story begins on page 4.(Image courtesy TolTest, Inc.)

## OTHER TOP STORIES



## DEPARTMENTS



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# View from the Center

## Talking about BRAC

O.K., let's talk about it.

BRAC.

The questions being asked are: what's going to happen, when, how, to whom and will it have an impact on us here at AFCEE?

The answers, for now, in order, are:

- I'm not sure yet
- Don't know yet
- Again, not certain at this point and
- Maybe so.

*Paul Parker*
*AFCEE director*

Now for another question. Will it in any way inhibit our ability to do the work the Air Force needs us to do? That's an even shorter answer.

No.

Now, I'm not being glib here. BRAC is a serious affair, and we know our headquarters location at Brooks City-Base is on the proposed list. We don't know and won't know for some while whether or not it will be on the final list. But let's say it is. In fact, let's plan for it. That's the best way I know to deal with the possibility, so that's exactly what we're doing.

We're working with the folks at Lackland Air Force Base to give them all the information they need in the event that we do move to a new home there. People have asked me if we'll be in an existing facility or a new building. I don't know. We're making visits to the installation to see what areas they have that might be suitable for us.

I've also been asked if there's a chance we'll move to another installation in town. I doubt it. Right now, if we move, the proposal has us going to Lackland, so that's what we work with. And I'm glad of it. When I look around at the people whose jobs are moving to another city, I'm darn glad of it.

I, personally, am spending a lot of time thinking through the *potential* impacts of the *possible* move on the people here at AFCEE. Sure, it will mean new commute routes; we all know that and we're all running over the possible routes to and from work in our minds. I suspect everyone in the building has done that by now and, as always, there will be some who rejoice and some who groan.

But I'm also trying to think ahead about other possible impacts on people here. For example, how will this affect those who have childcare arrangements in this area? Is there any information we can gather that will help ease that transition? What about those who might rely on someone else for transportation to and from work, through a carpool, perhaps, or via a spouse that works in this area?

It's stuff like that that keeps popping into my head. I know that there will be many things we can't control and many people will face individual challenges that I can't anticipate. But I want to try. And if there's something that I, as a member of the AFCEE family, can do to help meet those challenges, I will do my best to do that, and to make it possible for members of the family to make necessary changes with as little turmoil in their lives as possible.

You got my word on it.

I'm thinking ahead, too, to our customers' needs. Many of them will be in transition as well. They'll need us to be there for them more than ever before; to do the work we always do in the way they've come to expect. And they've come to expect a lot, because we've always given them a lot. And that's the right place for us to be.

I know because our customers' tell me so.

Again and again and again I hear from the people who rely on us that we are exceeding their every expectation. Without us, work would not be accomplished. Without us, the excellence that their stakeholders have come to expect from them would be missing.

We provide the Air Force with a tremendous return on its investment in us, and our senior leaders know this. Just as I want to take care of the people here at AFCEE, our leaders want to take care of us. Know this. Keep it in front of your thoughts that what you do is valued at the highest levels of our government.

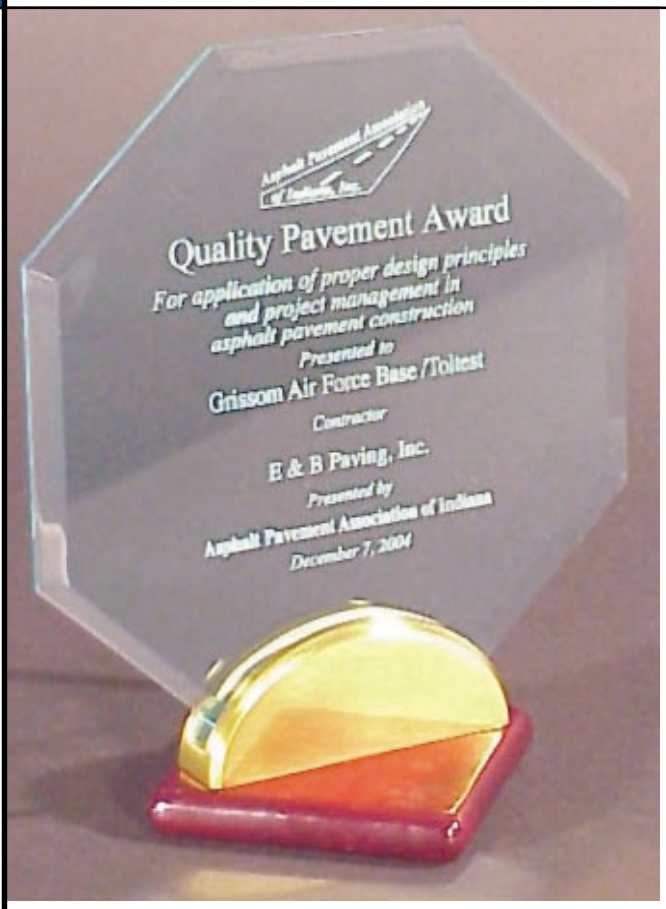
With that comes the responsibility to always work to be better. We've engaged in using lean events methods to strip away unnecessary steps from our business practices and hone them into razor-sharp models of efficiency.

The "lean" approach, for those who may not know, has nothing to do with working out at the gym and everything to do with doing away with those things that add no value to our products. It's a system based on the 1950s Japanese production model used by Toyota.

Using this process we continue to review our manpower to make sure we've got the right people in the right jobs to provide the right levels of customer support.

And know that during the transitions ahead, whatever they are, whenever they are, we will do what we always do: meet the challenges together and provide our customers' with seamless service.

To all of you, have a safe summer, spend as much time as you can with family and friends and remember that while work is an important part of your life, it's not your life.




**Recognition:** Pavement award given to AFCEE contractor TolTest, Inc., by the Asphalt Pavement Association of Indiana for its work at Grissom Air Reserve Base.

**Lighting the way:** AFCEE's project at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., included installation of a new airfield lighting system.

# Award-winning projects completed at Grissom

AFCEE contractor TolTest, Inc., has developed and completed airfield projects valued at more than $10 million at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind.

Grissom is home to the 434th Refueling Wing which has played a role in the war on terror and been involved in the Iraqi conflict.

At 14,000 feet long, the Grissom runway is the second longest in the United States and serves as a backup landing site for the NASA space shuttle.

The 14,500-foot runway at Eielson AFB, Alaska, is said to be the longest in North America.

The projects involved subgrade repairs, repaving, joint and runway shoulder repairs to the airfield and complete renovation of the airfield lighting and control systems.

TolTest officials said the projects were put on a fast track because the base had scheduled a complete 120-day airfield shutdown so that the work could be done.

In the meantime, the refueling tanker aircraft were moved to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and Andrews AFB, Md., to support the mission during the shutdown.

Officials said the compressed scheduled often required that two or more activities take place in the same area at the same time.

The paving work included asphalt repaving and remarking of the runway stripes.

Three million square-feet of existing paving were milled and repaved, requiring 39,000 tons of asphalt. In addition, 15,000 square-feet of full-depth concrete repairs were made using 2,000 tons of concrete.

Officials report that the airfield paving project has been named the Indiana State Asphalt Paving Association's Airfield Project of the Year and received the National Asphalt Paving Association's Airfield Paving Project of the Year Award.

Another project was the installation of a new airfield lighting system, which included repairing and replacing edge and overrun lights, construction of a new 4,000 square-foot electrical-vault building and installation and integration of new control components.

The entire airfield lighting system is computer controlled and managed through touch screens.

Officials added that the airfield projects have received AFCEE's "Blue Rating," which is the highest rating achievable, they said.

Officials attribute the projects' success to the coordination that took place before and during the work to ensure that the tasks were completed efficiently and on time.

Weekly coordination and design review meetings were held in the months leading up to and during the field work. These gatherings were instrumental in identifying issues early and implementing solutions to ensure the success of the entire project, said officials.

Because of efficiencies achieved during the field work, 17 discrete changes, valued at more than $250,000, were made with no increase in project schedule or budget, they said.

# -Iraq Update-

**Snow not a show-stopper:** Despite heavy snowfall, Iraqi nationals continue work on the new Sulaymaniyah Recruiting Center, a $770,000 project in northeast Iraq.

**It's a jungle in there:** Iraq workers use wooden poles to shore the roof of the Sulaymaniyah Recruiting Center

**Grand opening:** Americans and Iraqis gather for the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly constructed Sulaymaniyah Recruiting Center.

# Recruiting center in Iraq completed

The ribbon was cut recently on the new Sulaymaniyah Recruiting Center, a $770,000 project in northeast Iraq near the Kurdish town of the same name.

Contracted and administered by AFCEE, the recruiting station for military, police and border patrol personnel will support the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, or MNSTC-I.

"The purpose of this facility is to provide sufficient, secure and high-quality spaces for the critical local recruiting effort," said Keith Pushaw, program manager with ECC International, the prime contractor based in Burlingame, Calif.

The project includes two one-story buildings, a reception center and an entry-control building. Also included are rooms for interviewing, testing and medical screening; a recruit sleeping area; showers and latrines; and staff office space.

The project, which began in September 2004, posed many challenges during its 18-week construction process, officials said.

Major delays were caused by the Ramadan holiday and inclement weather.

During the month-long observance of Ramadan, Muslims fast during the daylight hours. Businesses may also shut down until the evening.

Also, during the early stages of the project, delays were caused by rain, and even after the

# Project reaches milestone

precipitation stopped, it took several days before the ground was dry enough to allow heavy equipment to begin work.

Other delays and slow-downs were caused by heavy snowfall and other holidays, such as the three-day celebration held in conjunction with the elections in January.

Finding materials and labor has been challenging, as well. Because of the growth now taking place in Sulaymaniyah, many local contractors have had trouble finding skilled labor.

Much of the building is a result of Kurds returning to Iraq from Turkey and Iran since the fall of Saddam Hussein, causing an increased demand for housing and other facilities.

The recruiting center and entry control building were constructed with blocks and mortar, which is more labor-intensive but also puts more Iraqis to work, said officials.

Well-qualified masons and block workers available in the local area, and using established technology will make repair and maintenance easier in the future, they added.

While Iraqis are skilled builders, they have their own construction methods. For example, in Iraq workers use a large number of wooden poles to shore a roof while the concrete is curing. Going through a building under construction is like walking though a dense forest, officials said.

Despite all the challenges and unique conditions, the team assembled for this project stayed focused on delivering a quality facility as quickly as possible, said Lt. Col. Spencer Patterson, AFCEE's senior person in-country.

AFCEE's prime contractor, ECCI, which is a small, U.S business, hired a local subcontractor from Sulaymaniyah and built a solid project team, he said.

Members of this team included project manager Bill Upton of the company's Kirkuk office and assistant project manager Sonny Sebastian and quality control officer Louis Perez, who were onsite.

Matt Parker, the AFCEE contracting officer's representative in Baghdad, said, "We are here to do a complex job under difficult circumstances, with many stakeholders. The only way we can make it happen is if we all pull in the same direction."

Colonel Patterson noted also that ECCI took a partnering approach with its subcontractors and clients, making sure that all design issues were quickly resolved with their assistance.

Phased design drawings could then be submitted promptly to AFCEE for approval.

"Despite the tight schedule, tough weather, constrained budget and Iraqi construction methods, the overall quality delivered by the finished project is excellent," Colonel Patterson said.

The high-quality structural and finish work, in particular, were praised by several of the senior officials present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, he added.

"Too often, tight schedules and even tighter budgets result in 'quick and dirty' construction – but not here," he said. "This project is a true testament to those building quality for the new Iraq."

He concluded: "We are helping rebuild the Iraqi military, police forces and border patrol. The MNSTC-I objective is to get these security forces fully trained and equipped so that they can maintain stability, and we can get out of here. Providing these facilities is an essential step toward reaching that goal."

Three buildings for the new Al Muthana Air Base at the Baghdad International Airport have been turned over to the Iraqi military – a significant milestone in the formation of a major military installation, said AFCEE officials.

Renovation of the three buildings is part of the first phase of a $21 million project to completely renovate and repair the base's utility systems and infrastructure, including maintenance facilities for first-line repair of C-130 transport aircraft.

Another key project objective is to reconnect the new base to the Iraqi national power grid, said officials.

**Inside look:** Interior of one of the three renovated buildings that were turned over to the Iraqi military for the new Al Muthana Air Base at the Baghdad International Airport.

AFCEE prime contractor TolTest, Inc., of Ohio s heading up the work on the project.

The three Phase I priority buildings were repaired and renovated for use as warehouses. They were fitted with new sheet-metal roofs and electrical systems and fixtures. Crews fixed also the entry doors and repaired and painted interior plaster and exterior stucco surfaces.

Officials said the project is being completed under the Conceptual Work Plan/ Implementation Work Plan process, which streamlines field execution and accelerates work in the field. The project is divided into three phases, allowing clients to prioritize the work to fit their immediate needs.

Work at the airport is subject to the most stringent security requirements of any site in Iraq, and to date not a single onsite security incident has been reported, said officials.

In addition, TolTest is the only contractor to obtain permission to house local Iraqi nationals at the airport. Doing this has streamlined site access issues, allowed more work hours per day, improved productivity and increased the safety of workers coming to the site on what is commonly known as the most dangerous road in Iraq, officials said.

The project team currently has more than 350 TolTest and subcontractor personnel and Iraqi nationals working onsite to complete an additional 24 buildings.

**Storage space:** A warehouse is constructed for an Iraqi National Guard battalion facility in As Suwayrah.

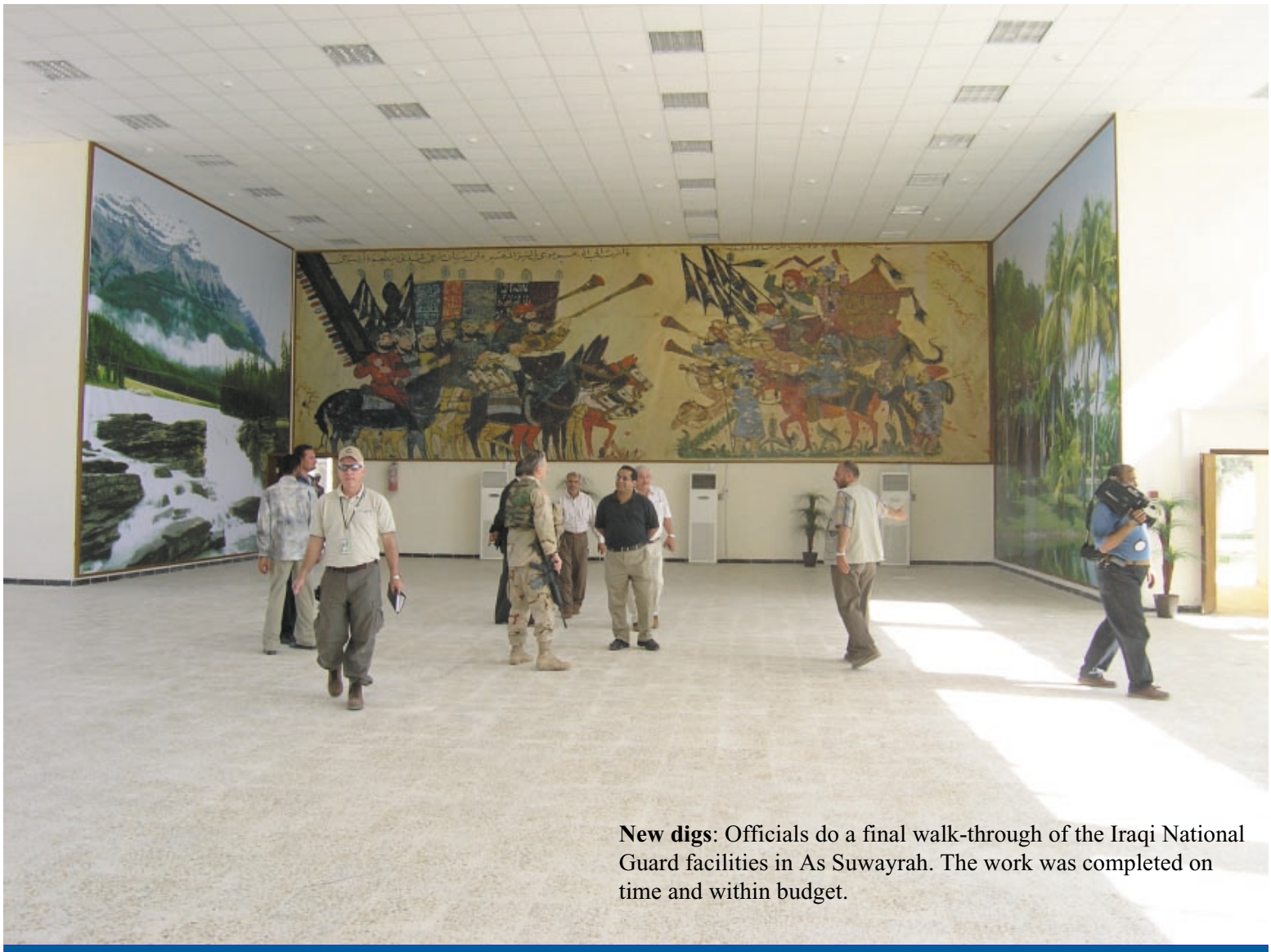
# Quality approach reaps benefits

CAPE Environmental Inc., of Atlanta implemented a quality improvement program, or QIP, to identify and train Iraqis nationals working on AFCEE projects.

Under the QIP, training is provided in key construction areas requiring expertise in the civil, electrical and mechanical areas.

Use of the QIP began when the firm was working with Ukrainians and Iraqi multinational forces to construct an Iraqi National Guard battalion facility in As Suwayrah.

CAPE officials said they used a low-profile approach in the program to "put an Iraqi face" on the project. They did this by using Iraqi consultants and subcontractors to do the coordinating and negotiating on the project with local community leaders, security forces and government officials.



**New digs**: Officials do a final walk-through of the Iraqi National Guard facilities in As Suwayrah. The work was completed on time and within budget.

Doing business this way, officials said, gained the trust of the local population.

Iraqi subcontractors are the ones who identify construction operations requiring worker training, identify and select the people who will be trained and then train and certify workers in the various skills.

CAPE's superintendents and foremen provide quality checks of the crew's performance.

Officials noted that a number of benefits associated with the low profile approach became apparent during the course of the As Suwayrah project. Among them were streamlined procurement and storage of construction materials.

CAPE pre-purchased 90 percent of materials early in the project and stored them either onsite with security provided by the locals or at the manufacturer's locations, both at no added cost to the project. This had the additional benefit of reducing delays due to disruptions in the supply of materials.

At maximum labor levels, CAPE's Iraqi workforce numbered more than 1,000 Iraqis per day, 80 percent of whom were residents of local towns and villages.

As a result, the project was completed on-schedule (the Iraqi Army occupied the As Suwayrah site within three weeks of the project's completion) and within budget.

# Ministry of Trade buildings renovated

Pasadena, Calif.-based Tetra Tech, Inc., an AFCEE prime contractor, recently completed renovations to the Iraqi Ministry of Trade headquarters in central Baghdad.

The two, eight-story Ministry buildings were severely damaged during the 1990 Gulf War and subsequently stripped of all usable fixtures and materials.

Working multiple shifts to accelerate project completion, Tetra Tech and its Iraqi subcontractors performed 700,000 work-hours in seven months without a single fatality, although the site was attacked three times by insurgents.

The newly renovated Ministry buildings currently house approximately 1,500 government workers dedicated to fostering future Iraq's economic development, said officials.

Tetra Tech's other work for AFCEE includes a $22.8 million project to construct 11 medical clinics and the $36 million Al Rasheed project, which involves constructing brigade facilities consisting of over 80 buildings to support the Iraqi National Guard.

# Unexpected discoveries don't stop Andrews housing project

A military family housing project valued at more than $49 million at Andrews AFB, Md., is moving along despite a number of unexpected discoveries.

The project, which is due for completion in late 2006, involves demolishing 645 unusable homes, building 100 new ones and remodeling 126 others.

During construction, workers uncovered a section of a World War II-era base taxiway under the old base housing.

The existence of the concrete path, which had been covered with dirt and houses built on top of it, caught everyone by surprise.

The taxiway wasn't on any of the pre-contract base pictures or map but was later found in an archived 1951 map of the installation, said John Cann of Portage Environmental, Inc. He works as a contract support specialist in the Housing Support Contracting Division.

In any event, the taxiway was not taken into account when proposals for the housing project were submitted by contractors. So modifications had to be made to the contract to allow the contractor to unearth the taxiway and then find a way to work around it.

Although a preliminary estimate indicated that one of the modifications would cost about $12,000, the actual price turned out to be one-tenth of that price – $1,200.

Also uncovered during the demolition of the old structures was a system of transite piping embedded in the concrete-slab foundations.

Part of an old forced-air central air-conditioning system, the asbestos-cement composite pipes carried heated and cooled air throughout the houses.

The presence of asbestos meant that concrete in which the pipes were encased had to be treated as hazardous waste, thus requiring special handling. "It'll cost more per pound to dispose of it," explained Mr. Cann.

**Out with the old:** A military family housing project at Andrews AFB, Md., includes demolishing 645 unusable homes.

In addition, the concrete that is lost because of its contact with asbestos can't be reused. "Part of the proposal was to use the concrete as fill," he said. "Now we have less of it to use."

But any challenges the Andrews work encounters have been met successfully by the AFCEE team managing the project, which has a combined total of "125 years of military and federal civil service experience," according to Mr. Cann.

"That's the good news," he said.

Locally, the team is led by contracting officer Rebecca Rounsavill, also of the Housing Support Contracting Division.

Onsite, quality assurance inspectors Steve Caldwell and Joe Cook of the San Diego-based firm URS, "have done a super job of staying on top of an ever-growing site," Mr. Cann said.

They are in daily contact with the AFCEE team members, letting them know immediately of any problems at the jobsite, said the contract support specialist. "“They're really on top of the situation, day and night."

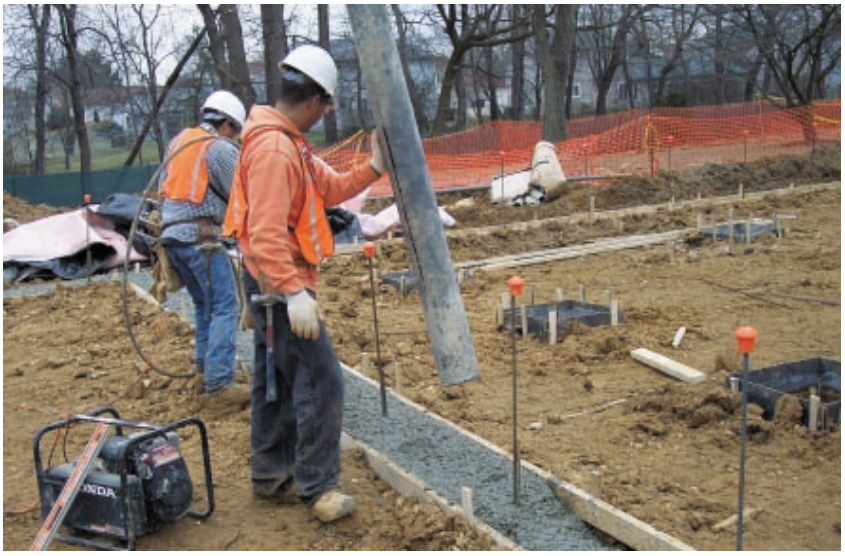
As an example of their vigilance, he said, the inspectors found a house foundation pad that they believed didn't meet specifications.

So they alerted the contracting officer about the situation, and after tests on the concrete confirmed the inspectors' findings, the builder had to tear up the entire foundation and start over.

The company was required to "provide a quality product to the Air Force and live up to contract specifications," said Mr. Cann.

In addition, he said, contract administrator Garry Ford negotiated three "time and materials" modifications that kept the project flowing and made sure the Air Force was getting the most "bang for our buck."

"We have approximately six more (modifications) in the works right now," said Mr. Ford. "The Andrews AFB project is growing daily."



**In with the new:** Workers begin laying the foundations for 100 new military family houses at Andrews AFB, Md. The $49 million program is due for completion in late 2006. The project, however, has run into some unexpected developments, such as the discovery of a World War II-era base taxiway under the old homes.

By Barb Burnham Housing Privatization Division

# Housing workshop focuses on Air Force, private-sector teamwork

AFCEE's Housing Privatization Division was host to the two-day 2005 AFCEE Housing Privatization Workshop held in May at the Omni Hotel in San Antonio.

Event presenters and attendees focused on the need for ever-increasing teamwork between the public and private sectors and the need to train current Air Force housing personnel to execute the housing privatization program and provide portfolio-management expertise.

The growing number of projects and bases turning to privatization makes an understanding of the process imperative for government and industry participants (the so-called "privateers").

Brig. Gen. Delwyn Eulberg, director of Installations and Mission Support, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, gave the keynote presentation.

Emphasizing the importance of housing privatization on the overall Air Force mission, he said the collaboration between the Air Force and private-sector developers provides military members with a benefit they've earned – quality family housing – and contractors with a chance to earn a profit now and in the future.

General Eulberg touched also on the difficult job the housing flight chiefs have at the various installations because they deal with all sides of the family-housing issue, including the residents. "To work in housing you have to deeply care about the members," he said.

Other speakers included Col. William Macon, chief of the AFCEE Housing Division; Col. Maryann Chisholm, chief of the Programs Division, Air Combat Command (ACC); and Bob Moore, Air Force Housing Division chief.

The speakers presented the perspectives of AFCEE, ACC and the Air Force, respectively, on housing privatization efforts.

Chris Hunt of Hunt Building Corporation shared the private-sector perspective.

Privateers spent the afternoon of the first day and the late morning and afternoon of the second day in breakout sessions, which were divided into three tracks, each consisting of between one and three sessions. Fifteen breakout sessions were offered.

AFCEE members and representatives from Jones Lang LaSalle, an AFCEE privatization support contractor, presented the sessions. Topics ranged from concept development plans to the final closing of real estate deals to the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the process.

The event ended with a question-and-answer session.

The 2005 AFCEE Housing Privatization Workshop proved a success for those involved by improving the understanding of the relationship between the Air Force and private sectors and by putting all privateers on track for future projects.

# Nevada mountain sites get new power system

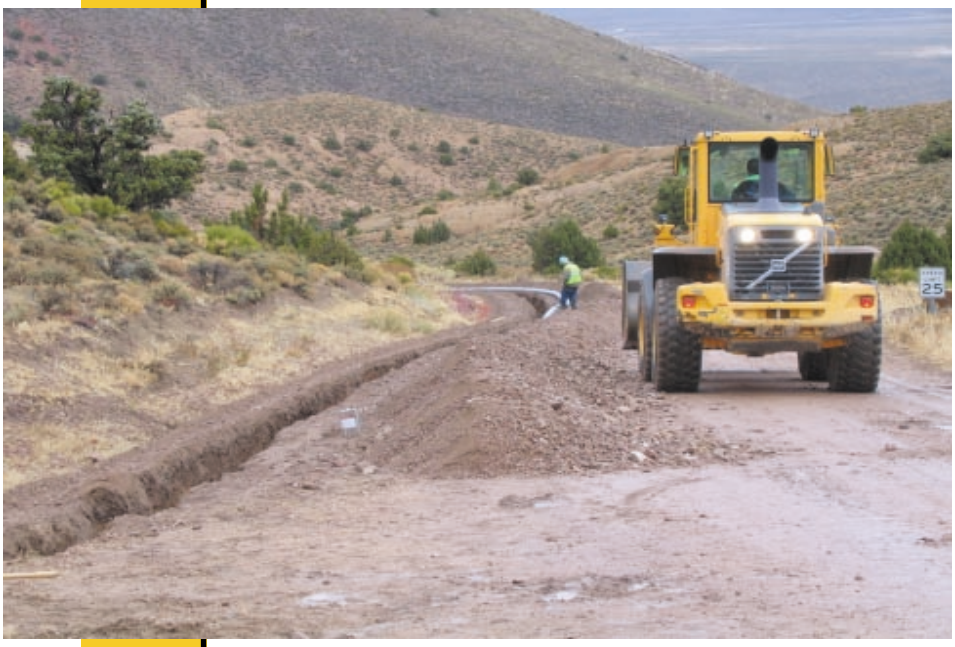
Two remote sites located on top of a mountain in Nevada recently got new power systems under an AFCEE-managed primary cable project.

Project manager was Maj. Winston J. Shaffer II of the Major Command and Installation Support-Combatant Commands Directorate.

The work involved installation of new underground primary power to a radar site and a microwave tower, both run by Nellis AFB.

The installations are on the same mountain but not adjacent to each other. They are accessible by a narrow, unpaved service road that forks off to both sites.

The first, known as the "gap-filler," is a radar facility the Federal Aviation Administration relies on to cover "gaps" in the national radar system. It is used primarily as a backup facility. If one of the major radar grids goes down, the site can be energized to provide the needed coverage.



**Power climb:** Instead of going straight up the side of a mountain, the AFCEE contractor ran the new power cable along the dirt service road leading to two Air Force sites there. Part of the protective duct can be seen in the background.

The second site is the microwave tower that supplies information from the Tolicha Peak Electronic Combat Range back to Nellis. This is an especially vital function during such exercises as Red Flag, when the base needs to review testing data and provide real-time information to the pilots conducting the tests.

Red Flag is a realistic aerial war game used to train pilots from the United States, NATO and other allied countries.

The new cable replaces an old electrical power line that went directly up the sides of the mountains. It was laid on top of the ground and covered by rocks and debris.

Over the years, however, the cable shifted and parts of the protective PVC conduit were open to the elements and wild animals.

On several occasions small animals ate through the wire insulation, causing the power supply to be shut down. Both facilities then had to operate under generator-supplied power until the problem could be located and fixed.

And to find the problem, repair crews had to scale the side of the mountain, which has slopes as steep as 60 degrees.

Originally, the design by AFCEE contractor TolTest called for installing new electrical duct banks and cable in a straight path up to each facility.

However, after samples of rock formations were taken and analyzed for hardness, it was determined that it would be too costly to trench through the granite in the proposed path, particularly in the steepest areas.

The alternative plan was to trench the duct bank along the service roads that lead to each facility. Although officials said that this approach increased the amount of cable, conduit and pull boxes

**Cable guys:** Workers dig a trench for cable that will supply electrical power to two Air Force sites on a Nevada mountain.

required for the project, the savings in labor and equipment requirements would offset the additional material costs.

Also, by following the existing service roads, future maintenance and inspections would be easier for range employees.

Major Shaffer said that the contractor used some innovative approaches on the project, such as employing local specialty subcontractors who were familiar with the geological properties at the site and had performed similar operations under similar conditions.

The rock excavation subcontractor also modified one of the larger trenching machines, custom-tailoring the trench boom length and specialty bits to handle the granite found in the area.

Begun last September, work on the project continued into the winter months, which presented many challenges, such as snow and ice on the narrow roads that snaked up the side of the mountain.

Working on the project during the winter, however, ensured that repairs could be made, if needed, even during snowy weather.

Additionally, the project site was located one hour away from the nearest town and three hours from the nearest big city, requiring the contractor to adhere to a strict schedule and coordinate the shipment of materials, equipment and personnel to the site.

However, by early spring, as the weather was improving, the cable was pulled and the remaining system components installed and the system was placed in service.

Major Shaffer said that the Nellis AFB project representatives are very pleased with the quality of work, and the new system meets all of the user's needs.

The approach to the repair project addressed crew safety during installation, dependability of the system under all environmental conditions and ease of access for system operation and maintenance, the major said.

"The project was completed on time and on budget with a system that works and is easier to maintain," he said.

# Program

The Air Force Environmental Internet Data Call Program developed at AFCEE is now in version 2.1.

Adapted by Air Staff in 1998, AFEIDC was initiated at the request of AFCEE's Dallas Central Regional Environmental Office, which coordinates and consolidates all environmental data for Air Staff to meet the data requirements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Additionally, this information is used by the Air Force for a number of other purposes, such as program management and oversight, to answer congressional and senior-leader inquiries and to respond to miscellaneous data requests throughout the year.

Before the program was adopted, data was being submitted by the Air Force commands in a variety of ways. "Every installation was using a

# standardizes environmental data input

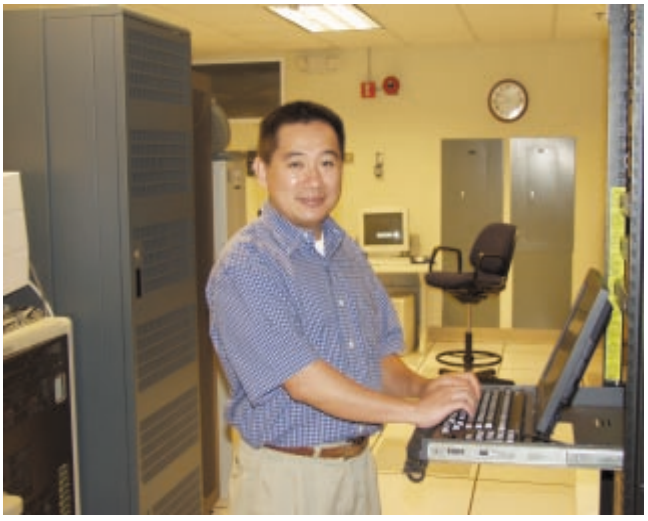


Photo by Gil Dominguez

**Untangled Web:** John Lin checks the Web server in the AFCEE computer room. Mr. Lin helped develop a Web-based program for transferring data from Air Force major commands to AFCEE's Central Regional Environmental Office in Dallas, resulting in a faster reporting process.

different system and document format to report their environmental data to their major commands, including e-mail, Word, Excel and fax," said contractor employee John Lin, Web application specialist with AFCEE's Computer Systems Division.

As a result, he said, the major commands spent months organizing the data before forwarding it to the Dallas REO, which would then spend a considerable amount of resources reformatting the information before it could be integrated into the required report. It was, said Mr. Lin, "a long and tedious process."

According to REO officials, Johnny Combs, formerly of the Dallas office and now in the private sector, requested that the AFCEE software development team design an application that would integrate all these data into a single format and thus speed up the reporting process.

During the initial discussions between the Dallas REO and the software development team, "traditional development strategies were proposed," said Mr. Lin, although these would not solve the problem and would prove just as costly as the old method.

One proposal was to develop an executable Windows application, but this would mean that AFCEE staffers would have to travel to every Air Force base to install the software and then train the people there on its use. Also, the software would require maintenance and, later, upgrading as newer editions were deployed.

REO officials proposed, instead, using the Internet as a way to transfer information between installations, the major commands and the Dallas office. The result was a Web-based platform that provided a flexible user-graphical interface screen for users to input their data.

Information on a particular base or major command can now be gathered within a short period of time – something that was not possible before.

Previously, it would take months to gather and reformat the information for reporting to Air Staff. Now "it takes only a month to collect data from each installation," said Mr. Lin.

Other benefits of the system include having a single repository for consolidated data, which can be accessed on a 24-hour, 365-day basis by AFCEE, installations, major commands and Air Staff.

Users can utilize the many reporting mechanisms to retrieve historical data and do a number of statistical and trend analyses.

With every data call the reporting requirements are reviewed and updates are made as necessary.

"Hundreds of installation and major command personnel are using this system," said Mr. Lin.

He is presently working on the release of the system's 2.1a version, which will facilitate the data call setup for the Dallas REO and overseas installations.

Recent changes include adding a checklist, listing a number of questions that help users inputting data into the system for the first time.

"All of the users from the installations, major commands and Air Staff are now verifying information in one single database," concluded Mr. Lin.

# Give me a 'W': Web University 'campus' thriving

By Gil Dominguez

AFCEE's Web University has entered the "major leagues" of environmental education.

That according to the online training site's manager, Tamee Tennison, who announced recently that 15 courses are now included in WebU's curriculum.

Recently added was the Defense and State Memorandum of Agreement Course.

The DSMOA program, established by the Department of Defense, involves a two-year cooperative agreement between DOD and the states under which the federal government reimburses a state for expenses it incurred for work performed at Defense installations.

Also, said Ms. Tennison, the Environmental Management Systems Course and Hazard Communication Training have both reached "a return on investment."

"It now costs pennies a person to deliver" the courses across the Air Force, Ms. Tennison said. "At last count, more than 80,000 people have completed the EMS course," and as of March 2004, more than 32,000 had registered to take the training.

Ms. Tennison said the numbers are sure to go up this year and next because of an Air Force policy letter that instructs personnel to take the course online.

To date, WebU has recorded just under 100,000 certificates of completion – persons who have actually finished a course

And soon students may get academic credit for their studies.

"We're working on the IACET (International Association for Continuing Education and Training) provider application that allows us to award continuing education units to students," said Ms. Tennison. "One of AFCEE's strategic goals is to get IACET certification."

Because WebU is government-owned and operated, the Defense Department can control operational costs, and there are no fees involved.

As a highly flexible system, WebU can take any training that the major commands have developed and "host it on the learning management system," Ms. Tennison said.

WebU has also the capability to track and document training requirements. "It can generate reports that show who completed what and when," she said.

WebU officials provide that information for organizations that want to know what type of courses their environmental personnel need to take and by when they have to complete them.

Now, WebU is "getting ready to give that ability to the whole Air Force" so that units can do their own tracking, said Ms. Tennison.

Also, with three new computer servers now online to serve WebU requirements, there is never a down time and the system can handle an increase in student enrollment.

"For environmental training there is nothing else like WebU in the Department of Defense," concluded Ms. Tennison.

# ISEERB

Environmental training has long ago stopped being about only recycling or pollution prevention.

Topics now range from unexploded ordnance and residential encroachment to the more esoteric affirmative procurement and risk assessment.

Keeping watch over the more than 30 classes being offered throughout the military is the Interservice Environmental Education Review Board, or ISEERB, which promotes efficient, cost-effective environmental education and training in the Department of Defense.

Officials said that because of the unique nature of environmental training, ISEERB was established as a standing subcommittee of the Interservice Review Organization, or ITRO, in 1994.

The ITRO works to consolidate training throughout all the services, eliminating redundant courses wherever it is feasible to do so.

For example, dog-handler training for all the military branches is taught only at Lackland AFB, Texas.

Similarly, ISEERB seeks to eliminate redundancy in the area of environmental education.

By Gil Dominguez

# serves environmental training

The board's permanent chairman is the director of the Environmental Directorate in the Office of the Air Force Civil Engineer, Washington, D.C.

It includes also representatives from all the military branches and all service schools. Each branch takes its turn serving as host for the board meetings which are held at different locations throughout the country.

The board's executive secretary position, which also is a permanent one, has been held since 2001 by AFCEE environmental specialist Tamee Tennison.

In addition to AFCEE, other key ISEERB participants are: Civil Engineer Corps Officers School, Port Hueneme, Calif.; Navy Occupational Safety and Health Environmental Training Center, Norfolk, Va.; United States Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks City-Base; Army Environmental Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.; U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For its part, "The Air Force looks at what another service school is offering, subject-matter experts evaluate the course and determine if it meets Air Force requirements," said Ms. Tennison.

If the course is approved for Air Force use, the service will not develop a similar course but make sure that its personnel attend the one being offered by the other military branch.

Another function the board serves is assigning the service schools to be lead providers for specific courses, making them responsible for managing, executing the courses and monitoring training results.

Currently more than 30 ISEERB-approved courses are being offered. These cover a broad range of subjects, including asbestos abatement, air quality, hazardous waste, natural resources, environmental law and environmental quality sampling.

Also included are a number of the cultural aspects associated with the environmental program, such as historical and cultural resources and Native American issues.

Courses may be taught in a classroom setting, conducted by an instructor onsite or via satellite transmission. The latter format is valuable for personnel stationed overseas, said Ms. Tennison.

ISEERB focuses on providing quality education, she stressed.

"The board keeps metrics on who is attending the courses and asks students to evaluate how a course met their service-specific training need," she said.

"So if we're seeing a trend that tells us that a course isn't meeting Air Force student needs we can go back and say, 'OK, what's up? What's changed (in the course)? What's different?' That's probably the biggest thing we do."

All ISEERB courses, Ms. Tennison added, can be paid for with funding provided by the Air Force Institute of Technology's Environmental Education Center.

"It is very rare that AFIT turns anyone down for environmental courses," she said, although the institute will not typically pay for training that is offered by a commercial provider if a similar one is available through another military branch.

"In most cases, ISEERB courses don't have any fees, except for TDY (temporary duty) costs," said Ms. Tennison.

The exceptions are a few courses offered by the Defense Logistics Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but these can be funded by AFIT, she pointed out.

"Most ISEERB courses are on a first-come, first-served basis," Ms. Tennison added."'All the schools have Websites that list the ISEERB courses and walk you through the registration process."

A section of AFCEE's Web University, the Center's online environmental training "school," contains the ISEERB master library.

"I keep all the documents there," said. Ms Tennison, who also manages WebU (see related story page 18). "There is a page where all the ISEERB members can view and download documents for their own use."

For more information on ISEERB or environmental training, contact Ms. Tennison at commercial (210) 536-4670) or DSN 240-4670.

# Environmental protection specialist offers recycling 'gentle reminder'

*The following interview originally appeared in the Carolina Flyer, the Pope AFB, N.C., newspaper. Staff writer Lisa Terry McKeown spoke with AFCEE's Nancy Carper, environmental protection specialist, who was on a staff-assistance visit to the base.*

Q: What is the purpose of your visit to Pope?

Ms. Carper: Headquarters Air Mobility Command asked me to come here and take a look at what Pope can do to increase the success of their recycling program.

After being here for a week, I will research, analyze and review what I've seen and then provide recommendations to make sure that things are squared away as far as Air Force and DOD instructions and the law (are concerned). I'll also make recommendations for the base's environmental programs.

Q: What have you seen during your time here?

Ms. Carper: I've seen that people want to do a good thing. When you have constant personnel rotations like Pope does, there needs to be constant awareness and education. People seem to need a gentle reminder that this isn't just an environmental flight thing. Everyone is very receptive to helping and doing their part. I guess we all just need reminders.

Q: Many people have said, "It's not a lifestyle for me" or "I just don't think about it." What's your response to that?

Ms. Carper: I've heard people use "It's not part of my lifestyle" as an excuse. I'm very surprised that military people say they're not used to recycling. In most cases, they've experienced recycling at another installation.

Granted, maybe the collection or commodities are a little different from installation to installation, but the Air Force has been doing this for a long time. This isn't something new. We pay a lot of money for recycling. To see it not fully utilized is really a shame for all of us who pay to the general fund with our taxes.

Q: How are recycling programs doing on an Air Force level?

Ms. Carper: The Air Force is achieving. The goal for 2004 was to reach a 40-percent diversion rate. As a whole, we reached that goal.

Q: What are the challenges and benefits of recycling?

Ms. Carper: This isn't unique to Pope, but people take the easy way out. If they have something that needs to be recycled and the trash can is closer, the trash can is where the item will go. It's very, very expensive to create and build new landfills.

When communities have to pay for a new landfill, residents will see the cost reflected in their bill. When people recycle, it helps the economy. People have small businesses to handle the collection and recycling of products. They then pay taxes and hire more people. You actually employ more people when you recycle than when you throw something away. Also, space is very limited.

People are saying, "I'll never see the effect of that," but they will. It's not going to be this week or this month or this year, but eventually they will. We want to leave a better place for the generations that we're turning (the country) over to.

Q: What can people do?

Ms. Carper: Hope is going in the right direction. Inherently, people want to do the right thing. People need to be pro-active in the workplace and at home. More people need to step up and say, "This is my installation. This is my community. This is my Air Force. This is my Earth and I need to do my part."

# 'Green power' fuels sustainability effort

Edwards Air Force Base purchases 138 million kilowatt hours of "green power" every year, enough to satisfy 60 percent of its electrical needs, with the remaining 40 percent coming from hydropower.

Green power is the marketing term for electricity that is partially or entirely generated from renewal sources, such as solar, wind, biogas or geothermal.

While fossil fuels or nuclear energy are the conventional methods for generating electricity in the United States, these types of power generation can affect human health and the environment.

Green power, on the other hand, uses sources that are continuously replenished by nature and, thus, significantly reduce the environmental impacts of electricity generation. Use of green power means less air pollution, including greenhouse gases, and a lowering of dependency on non-renewal and imported energy sources.

Over the past decade, hundreds of electricity suppliers have begun selling green power to consumers interested in supporting renewable energy. However, the type, availability and content of green power sources vary from state to state.

In California, Edwards has become the Air Force leader in the use of green power, maintaining the service's single largest renewal power purchase agreement.

The base's efforts have earned it the Green Power Purchaser Award, which is one of the categories under the Green Power Leadership Awards sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy.

The award recognizes agencies that have distinguished themselves through purchases of green power from a utility green-pricing program, a competitive green marketer or a renewable energy supplier.

In addition to setting an example for the Air Force, Edwards has also realized economic benefits associated with renewable energy.

The installation was able to mitigate the financial impacts of electricity price increases during the California energy crisis. The "open access" provisions in California's energy regulations allowed Edwards to negotiate a five-year contract for renewable power at lower rates than for conventional power.

Although California has since withdrawn this regulatory provision, estimated savings at Edwards are anticipated to be approximately $40 million over a five-year purchase period.

Efforts such as those at Edwards have helped make the Air Force the nation's largest retail purchaser of green power, according to EPA's Green Power Partnership. In fiscal year 2004, the service was responsible for more than

41 percent of the federal government's total purchases.

Green power, however, is just one of the many facets of the sustainability concept.

For the Air Force, sustainability means maintaining its mission without compromise or decline while protecting the environment and acting in a socially responsible manner.

Air Force officials note that balancing these diverse elements leads to an improved quality of life for Air Force people and protects future missions.

Sustainability also encourages both private and government organizations to become better stewards of the environment, they said.

Additionally, adopting the principles of sustainability can advance industrial competitiveness and stimulate technological innovation.

In the area of development, for example, Air Force construction planners and engineers may consider these sustainability principles:

• use resources efficiently and minimize the consumption of such raw material resources as energy, water, land and materials during the construction and life of the facility;

• maximize the reuse of resources;

• utilize renewable energy sources as opposed to using fossil fuels;

• create a healthy environment for workers and neighbors;

• design facilities for long term durability, flexibility and eventual reuse; and

• protect and restore the natural environment.

Air Force officials say that in a world of decreasing resources and increasing constraints, sustainability allows the Air Force to continue to operate into the future without compromise or decline.

For more information on the sustainability program, contact the AFCEE PROACT staff at DSN 240-4240, email pro-act@brooks.af.mil or visit the PROACT website at www.afcee.brooks.af.mil/pro-act.

# Travis vernal pools get health checkup

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. – Whenever Travis Air Force Base carries out a soil cleanup action, precautions are taken to protect any sensitive wetlands near the contaminated area.

A wetland is an area that temporarily holds rainwater long enough for a unique group of plants and animals to survive in it. When a wetland must be destroyed as part of a cleanup action, a new wetland is created at another part of the base to replace the one that is lost.

Currently, five created wetlands built in 2001 within a preservation area inside of base housing are receiving an

annual checkup to verify that they have been properly constructed.

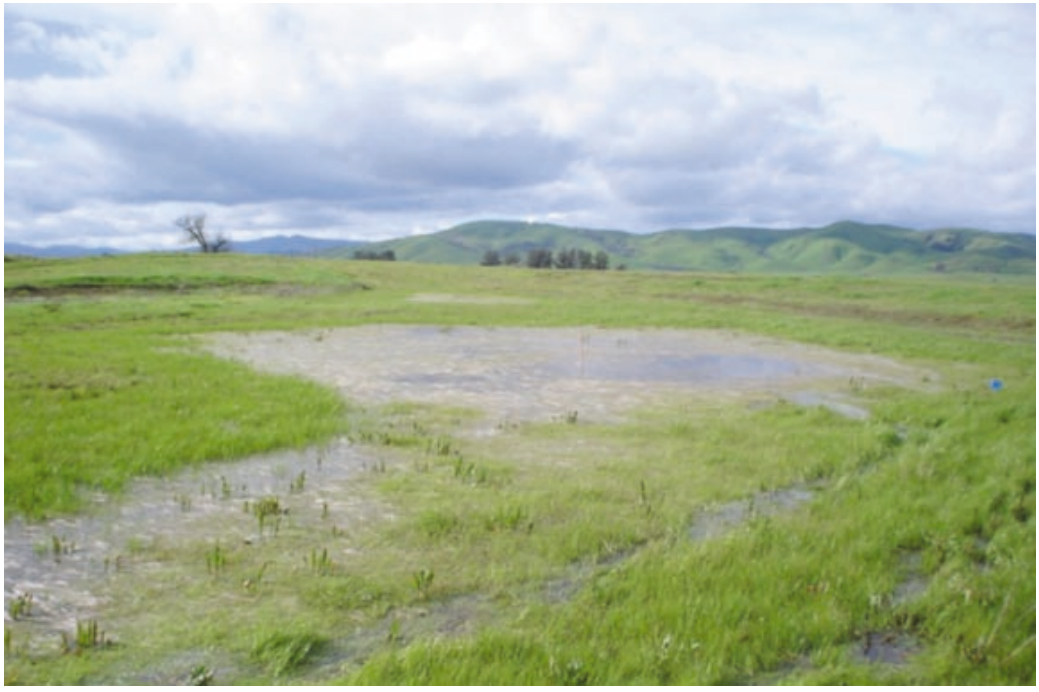
Known as vernal pools, these sensitive wetlands add to the plant and animal diversity in California and are protected by federal and state law.

To be classified as a vernal pool, several conditions have to be met:

• The pool must be seasonal in nature instead of a permanent body of water;

• Soils beneath the pool must be fully saturated to create oxygen deficient conditions; and

• the pools must have one or more specific plant species that only grow in these soil and water conditions.



**Poolside**: Vernal pools like this one at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., contain unique animal and plant species.

During pool construction, seeds from native wetland type plants were added to the topsoil, since plant diversity is a sign of good pool health.

Plants often found in these pools are sedges, popcorn flower, various rush species, curly dock and willow. The pools contain also a variety of small animals, such as snails, fresh water shrimp, water fleas and flat worms. These creatures increase the potential that the pools will continue to develop and improve in quality.

Currently, scientists from CH2M HILL, an environmental consulting firm, are conducting hydrology studies on the vernal pools to evaluate their water-holding capabilities and soil conditions. With this information Travis will be able to make minor modifications to the pools, if necessary, to increase their water retention times and improve the habitat quality of their inhabitants.

"It may look like a puddle of water, but a vernal pool is actually a complex habitat that does not develop overnight," said Mark H. Smith, Travis remedial program manager. "It is easy to build a shallow location that holds water, but there is no guarantee that it will attract the plants and animals that make this habitat so unique. We give them time and a little help to encourage their development."

These irregularly shaped pools were built so that they would blend into a nearby set of natural pools. They range in size from an eighth to a quarter of an acre. Each pool has reached a different level of plant diversity.

Vernal pool construction work on Travis began in the early 1990's as a biology experiment. Sponsored by the California Department of Transportation, the experiment's purpose was to develop mitigation techniques for supporting Caltrans road and bridge construction projects in wetlands.

Today, pools from this experiment retain a significant amount of water and have a wide diversity of plant and animal life, including endangered species. Travis is using the lessons learned from this success story to protect sensitive habitats and support environmental cleanup actions.

"We are pleased with the overall progress that these pools have made," said Mr. Smith. "We will continue these pool checkups until we are confident that they no longer need our help to thrive."

# Leadership training held at AFCEE

**Initiative:** Members of the City South Initiative Project group at AFCEE for a training session pose with Brig. Gen. Thomas Travis (center), commander of Brooks City-Base's 311 Human Systems Wing. Members are (from left) Dario Beniquez, 1st Lt. Jason Bishop, Marianne Amezcua, Maria Perez and (front) Jane Thomas. (Photo by Gil Dominguez)

AFCEE served as host to one of the monthly training seminars sponsored by City South Leadership 2005, a program of the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

Held in June, the daylong meeting focused on communication, marketing and business etiquette.

The session included also a tour of Brooks City-Base.

The seminar was organized by City South Leadership Initiative Project, or CSIP, a group of students taking part in the program's eight-month leadership training course that began in February and ends in October.

"Each group has about five people, and they come up with a name for their group," said AFCEE program manager Dario Beniquez, an event organizer. "We brainstormed at our first meeting and decided on CSIP."

The Brooks seminar is one in a series of gatherings being held throughout the year on the city's south side. Each student group is responsible for planning and executing a session.

"This leadership seminar has enabled me to grow as a leader and, at the same time, see how each person is a critical element in the success of a project," he said.

Brig. Gen. Thomas Travis, commander of Brooks' 311th Human Systems Wing, made the welcoming remarks and gave an overview of the installation's history to open the meeting.

Topic presenters were Mike Hawkins, AFCEE public affairs chief, who spoke on communication; business-owner Mary Repole, who covered marketing; and Joy Miller, also a businessperson, who made the etiquette presentation.

Other members of the group, which represent the private and public sectors, are Marianne Amezcua, 1st Lt. Jason Bishop, Maria Perez and Jane Thomas.

According to the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Website, the purpose of City South Leadership 2005 is to strengthen personal leadership skills and encourage people to become involved in the economic and social development of South San Antonio.

Brooks is in the City South region, which includes the new $600 million Toyota truck manufacturing plant and KellyUSA, formerly Kelly AFB and now a logistics and distribution center.

Chamber officials said that although San Antonio is one of the fastest growing cities in the country, most of its growth in the last 40 years has been in the north and west sectors.

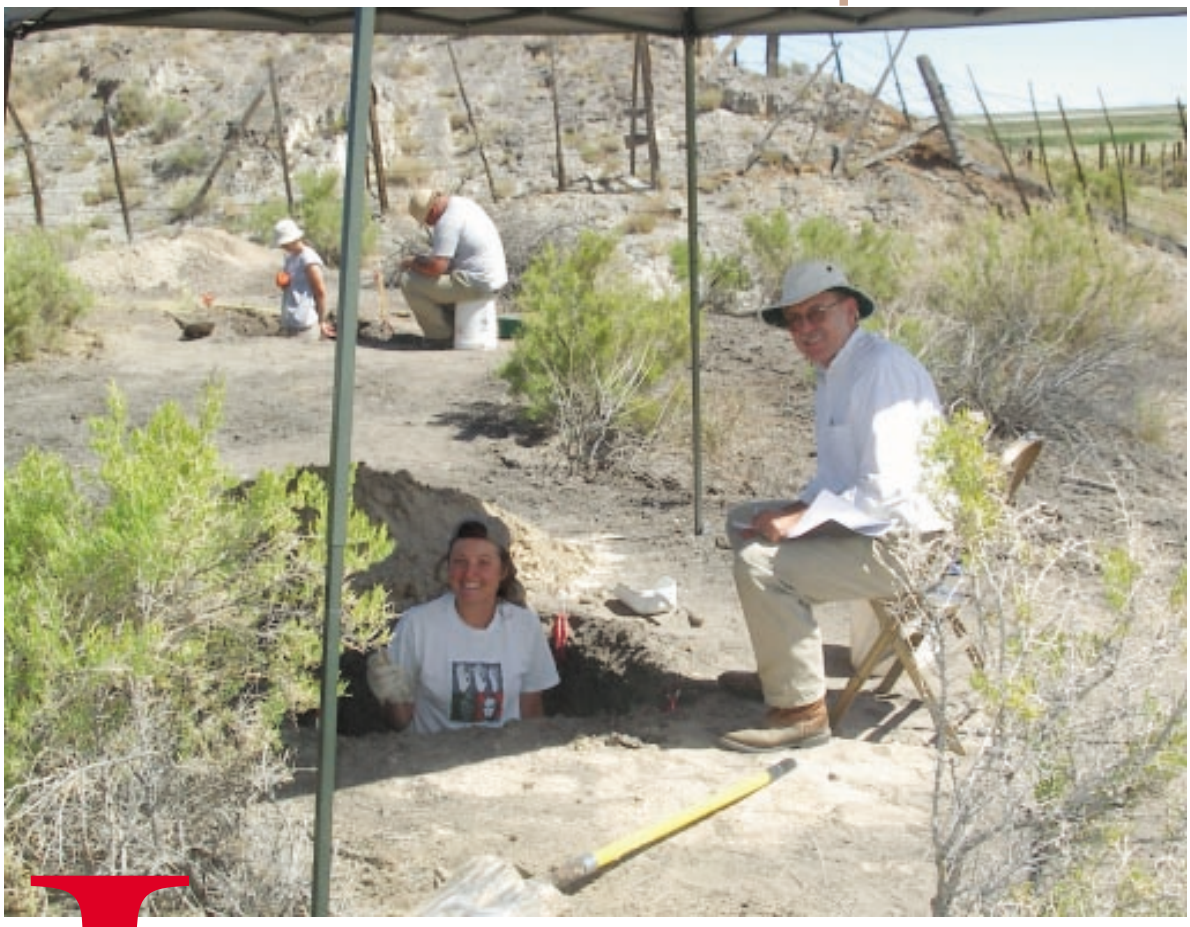
City leaders, however, want to balance the city's development by promoting the fledging south side as a new direction for the city's future.

In 2002 the San Antonio City Council approved the South Side Initiative Community Plan, which serves as a guide for supporting economic development, creating sustainable communities and promoting the unique historical, cultural and environmental assets of the city's southern edge, said chamber officials.

City South Leadership 2005 is one aspect of the south-side plan.

By Gil Dominguez

# Archeologist wants to uncover 'secrets of the past'



**Digging the work:** AFCEE anthropologist Dr. James Wilde and Jaynie Hirschi, Hill AFB cultural resources manager, work an excavation at a site called Mosquito Willy's on the Utah Test and Training Range near the base. Assisting them (background) are archeology graduate students from Brigham Young University. (Photo by Amanda Anderson courtesy EM Assist)

In the book "Desert Solitaire," author Edward Abbey writes that "the love of wilderness is an expression of loyalty to the earth, the earth which bore us and sustains us, the only home we shall ever know"

The late writer's work, considered a classic in nature writing, is an account of his experiences during the two summers he spent alone as a ranger at Arches National Park in Utah.

AFCEE archeologist Dr. James Wilde shares Mr. Abbey's love for nature and the outdoors – and confesses to having read his book at least 30 times.

And like the writer, he also experienced some solitary time in the wilderness. In Dr. Wilde's case, his adventure took place in the vast forests near Butte, Mont., where he spent the summer of 1977 working for the U.S. Forest Service.

A young graduate student at the time, he was given a large stack of aerial photos, some maps and, as he recalled, was told, "These are the timber-sale areas. Go out and survey them."

"My boss told me, 'Call in every now and then and tell me everything is OK,' added Dr. Wilde with a smile. "They gave me a four-by-four pickup and all these maps, and I was on my own for three months."

Although he spent most nights in an apartment in town, there were times that he slept in the woods after hiking all day long.

There were some encounters with wild animals, but nothing serious. Like the time he was coming off a ridge and saw an elk relaxing in a stream. Dr. Wilde went down and sat next to the sow.

"I started to slowly unzip my backpack to get the camera out, and I think she heard that," he said. "She kind of looked around, and after about three minutes she must have thought that things didn't look right, so she sprang up and ran away. I was close enough to get a good splashing as she rose up!"

After spending the summer in the woods, Dr. Wilde went on to complete his master's degree in anthropology and later his doctorate at the University of Oregon.

His undergraduate degree is from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, one of the top schools for anthropology in the nation.

Dr. Wilde's Thoreau-like fascination with the natural world was influenced by his growing up in the West. His family lived at different times in Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona and New Mexico – places with wide-open spaces.

"We lived in small communities associated with uranium milling," he said. "My father was a radiological engineer and metallurgist. "I was always outside and got to know the countryside very well. I guess that's how I got interested in archeology."

Dr. Wilde based his doctoral dissertation on a four-year study of the Steens Mountain area in southeast Oregon conducted by Washington State University and the Universities of Washington and Oregon.

It involved a survey by paleo-environmentalists and archeologists who wanted to learn what the environment was like in that area of the Great Basin Desert thousands of years ago.

The Great Basin, which covers about 190,000 square-miles, is bordered by the Sierra Nevada Range on the west, the Rocky Mountains on the east, the Columbia Plateau to the north and the Mojave and Sonoran deserts in the south.

"There had been big Pleistocene (era) lakes in the valleys," said Dr. Wilde. "We wanted to reconstruct the environment from the end of the Pleistocene, about 11,000 years ago.

"With everything we found on the ground, in lake cores and packrat middens and in cave and open site excavations, we were able to piece together what people did in that area and how they interacted with their environment for the last 10,000 years. My dissertation was based on those excavations."

While finishing his doctorate Dr. Wilde worked also for companies in Seattle that did contract work for the government. One job he held was as field director for the MX (now the Peacekeeper) missile program, doing surveys in Utah and Nevada.

The government had proposed basing the missiles on a mobile rail system to keep them from being destroyed in the event of a nuclear strike by the former Soviet Union.

Dr. Wilde worked on the program until it was cancelled eight months later.

In the mid-1980s, he had just about finished his doctoral dissertation when he was hired as assistant manager of the contract archeology program and adjunct anthropology professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

This position took him all over the Great Basin, from northern Arizona to western Colorado and throughout Utah and Nevada.

He served as assistant director for three years before being named the program's director. But after almost 11 years with the university he was ready for a change.

One summer while teaching at a Bureau of Land Management field school sponsored by BYU in Nevada, he became friends with a federal government archeologist who later called to tell him that there was an opening with the Air Force.

"He said, 'You should apply for it,'" Dr. Wilde recalled.

He did and got the job with the Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence.

> '...I'm also interested in geology...I like to understand how each piece of Earth got to be the way it is.'

Dr. Wilde's work at AFCEE involves cultural resources management, assisting Air Force installations in preserving important historical and archeological sites.

His said his favorite project so far was one that took place a year and a half ago in Utah, at an archeological site called Mosquito Willy's on the Utah Test and Training Range near Hill Air Force Base.

The place was named after a man who lived a hermit-like existence in the high western desert for many years, beginning in the early 1890s.

The Air Force took over the site in the 1940s.

The site is located on the western edge of a dry bed of an ancient lake that existed thousands of years ago. Lake Bonneville, as it is now called – home of the famous Bonneville Salt Flats –covered about 20,000 square-miles of present-day western Utah, eastern Nevada and southern Idaho.

Mosquito Willy settled near the foot of a mountain and made a living capturing wild horses and selling them to the Army and other customers. He built several corrals and channeled the nearby springs to irrigate his hay fields before the water flowed off into the desert.

The fresh-water springs near Mosquito Willy's settlement created a green desert oasis containing archeological remains dating all the way back to the end of the Pleistocene.

The study there focused on an eroding area of the large site, which turned out to be between 1,400 and 1,500 years old.

Because of the area's importance, Dr. Wilde and the other researchers proposed that the base do data recovery. "This is a mitigation effort where you take things out of the ground and study them instead of letting the site erode away," he said.

The AFCEE employee was in his element while working at Mosquito Willy's, which is located along the Utah-Nevada border – miles away from everything.

"We were out there in July, first of August. It was beautiful weather," Dr. Wilde said. "The only signs of civilization were the remains of Willy's corrals and our vehicles, and barely visible off to the west was the training range's boundary fence. Everything else looked pretty much as it has for the last six or seven thousand years."

"There's still a lot to do at the site," he added, "and it would be a lot of fun to go back there."

The married father of two sons said he continues to be fascinated by what has come before. "I'm not just interested in what happened in the last 11,000 years or so, I'm also interested in geology. I have a minor in geology, and I like to understand how each piece of Earth got to be the way it is.

"One of my professors used to call our work 'searching for the secrets of the past,'" he said. "I want to go out and find those secrets."

# AMIGO means more than being a friend for AFCEE engineer

"Amigo" means friend in Spanish, and that's what AFCEE environmental engineer Kay Grosinske has been to more than 150 foreign military students thousands of miles away from their homes.

Since January 2004 she has been a volunteer with the American Members of International Goodwill to Others – AMIGO – a program run by the Defense Language Institute's English Language Center at Lackland AFB, Texas.

Foreign students typically spend from two months to two years training in the United States.

The AMIGO program is a totally volunteer effort whose purpose is to help international military students adjust to the American environment and their new surroundings while they learn the English language.

It's similar in many ways to the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, except that the students being mentored are adult military members from around the world.

Ms. Grosinske started off sponsoring two students, 1st Lt. Denis Kyirma of Kazakhstan and Maj. Mohammed Al-Sawafi of Oman.

"I initially thought doing something twice a month with the students would be a bit difficult, given my already full schedule," she said.

But soon the list of people she was sponsoring started growing, and she found herself spending more and more of her free time on the Defense Language Institute campus.

"I became 'known' as I walked around DLI," Ms. Grosinske said with amusement. "Students came up to me and asked me to be their AMIGO. I took as many as I could and started recruiting friends to join the program."

After a while she had so many students who wanted to be mentored by her that she had to create a spreadsheet just to keep track of all of them.

Most of her first new students were Kazakhs, friends of Lieutenant Kyirma.

"Denis had great friends, and they became my friends," said Ms. Grosinske. "Mohammed was more reserved, but we worked hard on his English."

Her two original charges have since returned to their respective countries.

Ms. Grosinske recalled them fondly, particularly the lieutenant from the former Soviet republic.

"Denis became as close to me as my own much younger brother," said Ms. Grosinske. "I flew him up to my family's cottage in northern Wisconsin to fish and visit with my family during the time that he was in follow-on training. He will always be my brother."

In the past year and a half she has sponsored students from 32 countries in every part of the world, from South America to the Middle East.

And in addition to being a surrogate big sister to the young military people, Ms. Grosinske serves also as tutor, tourist guide, chauffer and even babysitter at times.

"I have been taking students everywhere, literally to every free or cheap event offered in and around San Antonio," she said.

The AFCEE employee and her students have tried a little bit of everything that is San Antonio, from river tubing to taking Latin dance lessons.

"A friend allowed a bunch of us to stay at her Medina River home three different weekends last summer, and the students – and I – felt like we were in heaven—horseback riding, swimming, fishing, eating, lounging and just being in one of the loveliest places I've ever been," said Ms. Grosinske.

"Other friends have opened up their homes to me and my students, where we have eaten long dinners and shared our many cultures."

Trips to the two San Antonio theme parks have provided memorable moments both for Ms. Grosinske and the foreign students.

"One of the most wonderful expressions I've ever seen on anyone's face is the look of a grownup who has been on a roller coaster for the first time," she remarked.

She recalled, too, the warm feeling she experienced when a Kazakh sergeant told her that "he would bring his children to Sea World one day, and I would be their guide. I so hope that happens someday."

Perhaps most importantly, Ms. Grosinske has helped students pass their English Language Comprehension Level test, known as the ECL. Failure means being sent back to their countries instead of heading for follow-on training.

To many of the foreign students, such a thing would be not only shameful but detrimental to their military careers as well.

So Ms. Grosinske has come to the rescue of a number of desperate students.

"I have enlisted the help of a retired teacher friend to help with a couple of really tough cases, and have passed on her words of study wisdom to many others," she said.

On two occasions she was asked to help two colonels who were in danger of failing the exam. The first one got a 91 percent. The second one, an Omani officer, took the test later and Ms. Grosinske had been nervously awaiting the results.

"He passed," she announced proudly. "That means that he'll now be going on to National War College. I am so very happy. That's two for two for the special cases."

Photo by Gil Dominguez

**Amigos:** AFCEE environmental engineer Kay Grosinske (second from left) attends the recent graduation of Georgian army Col. Davit Apsiaturi (center) from the Defense Language Institute's English Language Center at Lackland AFB, Texas. Joining her are (from left) Capt. Constantin Spinu of the Romanian air force; Jan Staten, director of the American Members of International Goodwill to Others, or AMIGO, program; and 1st Lt. Constantin Balan, also of the Romanian air force. Colonel Apsiaturi was mentored by Ms. Grosinske who as an AMIGO volunteer has helped more than 150 foreign students since 2004.

Part of the students' success can be attributed to Ms. Grosinske's unrelenting drive to have them learn the language.

"I tell new students they will love me or they will hate me, but they"*will* speak English well by the time they leave," she said. "They laugh and insist they want me to correct them all the time. They learn quickly that I really do correct them – all the time.

"Also, I have two rules in my car: wear your seatbelts and speak English, only English."

When Iraqis started coming to the United States to attend senior service schools, Ms. Grosinske was told by a friend serving in Baghdad that the students selected for the training were very worried about leaving their families behind because of threats by insurgents.

Ms. Grosinke's friend asked her if she could find a way to allow the students to bring their families to DLI and help them out once they got to San Antonio.

Normally, military officers attending senior-level training are allowed to have their families with them, but there was a question of whether that policy applied also at DLI.

"I really didn't know anyone when I started making phone calls, but I know a lot of people now," said Ms. Grosinske.""It was a matter of DLI agreeing to let the families accompany the students to DLI, too. DLI eventually said yes, and they started coming."

Currently, there are six Iraqi families and three single persons at DLI. Together, the families have more than 20 children.

Said Ms. Grosinske: "Realizing that their daily per diem would not go far with so many children to support, I started asking friends and strangers for their help in supplying the families with everything needed, so they would not have to rent anything."

Friends and well-wishers, including some AFCEE employees, contributed everything from beds to microwaves.

"And almost every child has a bike," Ms. Grosinske said happily.""In terms of putting smiles on peoples' faces, that was my biggest accomplishment."

Then there was the complicated logistical process of getting the kids ready for school.

"Not having children myself, I was unprepared for the amount of time it takes to register children for school," said Ms. Grosinske. "And there were a lot of them."

After taking the children to be tested for English comprehension, she accompanied the mothers to register the grade-schoolers and then went with the fathers to enroll middle- and high-school students.

The AFCEE staffer taught also the oldest students how to maneuver the VIA city bus system so they can get to and from school.

Even after the children are in school, Ms. Grosinske keeps in contact with teachers and school counselors to make sure any problems the youngsters may have are being understood and addressed.

"I took the first four Iraqi women to be tested for English as a Second Language classes and found a class location within walking distance for them," Ms. Grosinske said.""They attend twice a week, and the program baby-sits all the small ones while the moms are in class.

"The husbands are saying their wives are now 'bothering' them, asking what the English words are for many things."

The environmental engineer has spent many hours of her own personal annual leave so that she can help the Iraqi families get settled and "just be there for them."

She added that her deep involvement in the AMIGO program is possible because of the support she has gotten from her supervisory program manager, Dennis Lundquist of the Base Conversion Directorate.

And while Ms. Grosinske gets no compensation of any type for her involvement, "I have spent far more of my own money than I realized I even had," she said good-naturedly. "They (the students) have so little, though, and they ask for even less. Sometimes I am beyond exhausted, but my energy is renewed when I see the faces of the students – and their children – and feel their affection.

"The best feeling I have had is when the most adorable two-and-a-half year old Iraqi girl squeals 'Kay!' and runs up to me and jumps in my arms every time she sees me."

"Then there is the great feeling of having a student finally pass the ECL"– a hair's breath from having to return to his country in disgrace.

"This is what this program is all about for me."

For more information on the AMIGO program contact Ms. Groskinske at 4-6451 (commercial 210-536-6451) or by e-mail at kay.grosinske@brooks.af.mil. Also, Jan Staten, program director, at 210-671-2168 or janet.staten@lackland.af.mil.

By Rudy Purificato 311th Human Systems Wing

# Paintball warrior takes the game seriously

**Paintball warrior**: 1st Lt. Trey Doby loads up his "weapon" with paintballs in preparation for "combat" at a paintball field in San Antonio. Below, he takes aim at an opponent during a recent competition.

It's a popular outdoor sport whose "color commentators" are part of the game.

To First Lt. Alfred "Trey" Doby and other Brooks paintball enthusiasts, the sport that allows them to "slime" their adversaries with Ghostbuster-like proficiency equates to "painting the town red."

Oddly, red is the only color missing from paintballers' arsenal of rainbow ammunition. "Red is not used because it resembles blood," explains the lieutenant, an AFCEE program manager.

As a member of one of the more than 30,000 paintball teams worldwide, Lieutenant Doby is truly a devoted fan of this war game-inspired sport. "I was watching paintball competition on ESPN and got hooked," admits the 25-year-old South Carolina native.

Part of a tournament-winning team, Lieutenant Doby enjoys the challenges posed by a sport where marble-sized plastic spheres, containing a mixture of vegetable oil, food coloring and water, are propelled from high-velocity guns amidst a labyrinth of obstacles.

The object of the game is simple. Tournament teams, consisting of three people, amass points by capturing a flag in the middle of a field or eliminate opponents by splattering them with a hail of paintballs.

Paintball originated in the U.S. about 15 years ago. Today, international tournaments are held annually. The world cup of paintball is held at the Walt Disney World sports complex in Orlando, Fla.

Typically, venues where Lieutenant Doby plays, features themed obstacle courses. They range from medieval castle complexes to Dr. Seuss-like creations featuring 55-gallon drums, air-filled pillars and plastic shipping pallets.

Lieutenant Doby began playing paintball recreationally in November. He quickly adapted to the challenge of using his agility, cunning and ability to maneuver through and around barriers.

He also learned that being fast on your feet doesn't necessarily help a player survive a game where paintballs travel at speeds of up to 290 feet per second.

"It's not a timed sport. A game can last a few seconds or several minutes," he says. Opponents range in age from 10 to 60-plus years. Inexperienced players compete as recreational participants. Veterans participate in tournaments.

Games are played day and night. It involves close combat. There are risks, such as welt-producing paintballs that sting and stun victims. "I've been shot in every place on my body. The first time I got hit in the back, tears came to my eyes. It really hurts if you're hit on your extremities," recalls the lieutenant.

Once he was accidentally shot in the back of the head by a teammate.""I ran into his line of fire. It stunned me and broke the skin," he remembers. In paintball, you're eliminated if hit by friend or foe.

Following infantry principles, the key to winning is fire, maneuver and communication. "There's strategy, tactics and planning involved," Lieutenant Doby noted.

He learned his paintball lessons quickly. "The first thing I learned was to not stay behind a bunker too long because you'll be pinned down. You want to move to the best positions, in the

shooting lanes that are either in the middle or sides of the field, depending on the position of the opposing team."

The playing field is roughly half the size of a football field. Every field contains a long horizontal barrier calledÄ"the snake." Manipulating this barrier, by either crawling through or hiding behind it, is an important part of the game.

Another essential part of this sport is being properly equipped. Novice recreational participants can begin play with a minimum $200 investment. Lieutenant Doby has since spent thousands of dollars on equipment for tournament play.

It includes a top-of-the-line paintball gun powered by compressed air, ammo belts for paintball pods that each hold up to 150 projectiles, a plastic face mask called goggles, padded gloves, elbow and knee pads and neck guard. Optional equipment includes throat mikes for radio communications.

"It's a game of integrity. The referees don't see everything. Players who are hit take themselves out of the game," he says.

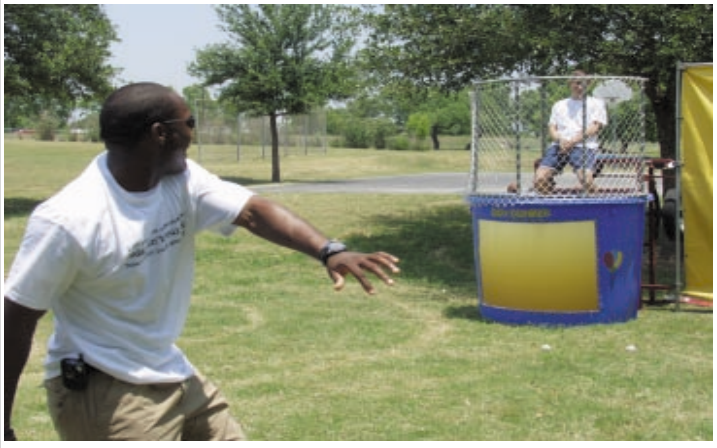
Honesty and sportsmanship usually prevail. More importantly, players enjoy a special bond. "It's also a lot of fun," says the lieutenant who prefers not to view the sport through "rose-colored glasses."

*(This story originally appeared in Discovery, the Brooks City-Base newspaper. It appears here, in a modified version, by permission of the author.)*

# Work hard, play hard

Late spring in South Texas usually brings two things besides heat and humidity: the annual AFCEE picnic and – local fans hope— the San Antonio Spurs in the NBA Finals. AFCEE folks like to play as hard as they work, whether it's enjoying an afternoon at the Brooks park or rooting for their favorite team.

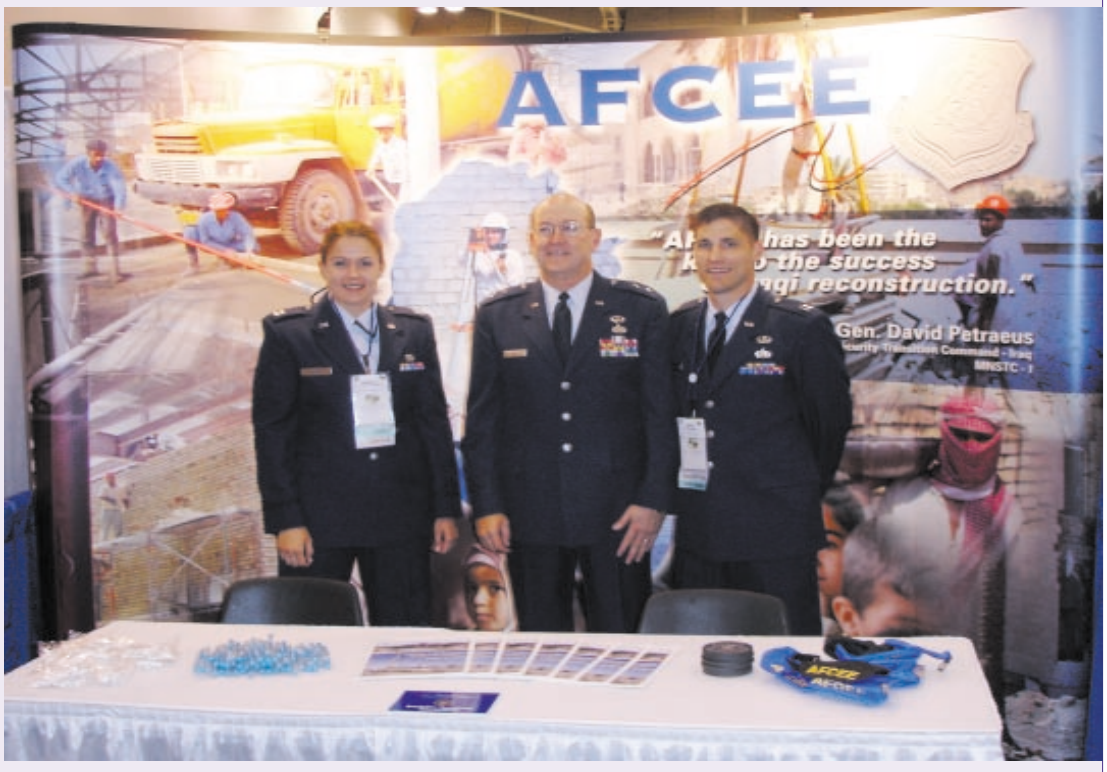
**Food and fun:** Barbecue chicken and brisket were on the menu at the annual AFCEE picnic.



**Rank has no privileges here:** First Lt. Alfred Doby winds up for a pitch at the release lever of the dunking-booth where Capt. David Gwisdalla perches precariously.


**True colors:** AFCEE fans of the San Antonio Spurs show their support by wearing the team's colors of silver and black and decorating their cubicles with all types of Spurs paraphernalia. Their enthusiasm was rewarded this year as the Spurs beat the Detroit Pistons four games to three to win the NBA championship, the third time since 1999.

**No dunking at this booth:** Maj. Gen. L. Dean Fox (center) the Air Force civil engineer, stops by for a visit at the AFCEE booth during the Society of American Military Engineers' annual conference in Louisville, Ky. Working the exhibit were Capts. Danielle Domingue and David Gwisdalla, AFCEE executive officer.




**Award-winning performance**: Hard work by AFCEE people pays off, too, as the Society of American Military Engineers' first Public Agency Award is presented to Center director Paul Parker (right) by General Fox at the organization's national conference in Louisville, Ky. The honor is given to the field organization that has made a notable contribution to the Society.

In accepting the award, Mr. Paul Parker said: "Without the hard work and dedication of the AFCEE men and women who serve our Air Force and our nation, this recognition would not have been possible."

# People at the Center

## Accomplishments

**Dr. Thom Rennie**, regional environmental manager with the Central Regional Environmental Office in Dallas, recently completed the Department of Defense's Executive Leadership Development Program, class of 2005.

His graduation certificate was signed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

The ELDP is a ten-month training program whose purpose is to help potential service leaders better understand the joint military environment and the war-fighters' mission and needs.

Fifty-four civilians and military personnel from all the services and DOD agencies were formed into six teams and sent through intensive field training and deployment to a forward area.

Dr. Rennie was on Team 4.

The groups underwent two days of orientation followed by two weeks of core curriculum classes in such subjects as leadership development and team-building under high stress conditions. The teams were then assigned for one to two weeks a month to a service installation for field training.

Their assignments included training with the Marines at Camp Pendleton, Calif.; with Air Force personnel at the Air Force Academy in Colorado and other bases; with Army Rangers and airborne troops at Fort Benning, Ga.; and a forward deployment to South Korea.

**Not just another day at the office**: Dr. Thom Rennie of AFCEE's Central Regional Environmental Office, Dallas, goes through the assault course at Marine Corps Recruiting Depot in San Diego as part of the Department of Defense's Executive Leadership Development Program.

"We were briefed by flag or general officers at each deployment," said Dr. Rennie. "We trained and ate with the troops, learned what they did and what their hopes and needs were."

The students went also to Washington where they attended seminars on defense, foreign affairs, politics and intelligence.

Said Dr. Rennie, "We served as team leaders, gave numerous graded briefings – some written between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.— read many reports, discussed the DOD roles and missions and wrote a paper on a contemporary joint issue. Mr. Paul Parker (AFCEE director) was my paper advisor."

Dr. Rennie, who has completed both Air War College and Army Management Staff College, said the ELDP was the best experience he had ever had in his career for learning about DOD collaborative efforts and the war-fighters who are living "at the tip of the spear."

As he put it so colorfully about the joint mission concept: "I've worn, it, slept in it, ate it, rode in it, flew in it, shipped in it, jumped out of it, ran over and under it, shot it, simulated it, marched it, land navigated it, PT'd (physical training) it, read it, wrote it, listened to it, debated it, learned it and, most importantly, lived it and made it happen 24/7 with my Team 4 buddies.

"The program has increased my ability to extend myself beyond what I considered possible a year ago and given me the added leadership and knowledge of DOD and the war-fighter to better serve our AFCEE customers."

Dr. Rennie was also one of six class members – three of whom were on his team – nominated for the program's Rosemary E. Howard Leadership Award.

## Promotions

**Angie Morales** has gone from secretary to budget technician in the Resources Management Division. Proving that education and persistence pay off, her promotion came shortly after she received her bachelor's degree from Texas State University-San Marcos, which she attended on a part-time basis.

Also advancing up the career ladder is **Kelly Meade** who had been a budget analyst in Resources Management but took a position as financial manager across town at Randolph AFB.

She is now working with the Air Force Human Resource Command and Control System Program Office there.

## Welcome

The AFCEE family welcomes new budget officer **John G. LaHue** who succeeded the retired Louise Lueb as chief of the Resources Management Division, Financial Management and Support Directorate.

# Retirements

**Ron Allen**, chief of environmental contracting at the AFCEE Judge Advocate Office, retired in April.

He began his service with the Air Force in 1970 after obtaining a bachelor of science degree and receiving his officer's commission through the ROTC program at East Texas State University in Commerce.

The Texarkana, Texas, native then went on to complete pilot training at the former Webb AFB in Big Spring, Texas.

Following pilot school he was assigned to fly B-52H bombers with the 319th Bomb Wing (Heavy) at Grand Forks AFB, N.D., and then served two tours in Southeast Asia where he participated in Operation Linebacker II, which was the around-the-clock bombing of North Vietnam to force the communist government there into negotiations.

Mr. Allen separated from the Air Force in 1976 to attend law school and received a doctor of jurisprudence degree from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash., in 1979.

Mr. Allen holds also a master of public administration degree from the University of North Dakota.

After getting his law degree he was recalled to active duty, serving with the Judge Advocate General Corps at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker AFB.

His other assignments included stints at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and the Sacramento ALC at McClellan AFB, Calif.

In 1986 Mr. Allen became the staff judge advocate at the Hughes Air Force Plant Representative Office in El Segundo, Calif., and then it was back to Texas for two tours at Sheppard AFB as deputy staff judge advocate and later military justice chief.

He served also as staff judge advocate at Arnold Engineering Development Center in Tullahoma, Tenn., before coming to Brooks in 1992 as a contracts attorney providing acquisition-law services to AFCEE.

Mr. Allen received the Outstanding Civilian Career Service Award upon his retirement.

**Bruce R. Leighton**, director of the Major Command and Installation Support-Silver Directorate retired in May after 13 years at AFCEE and 40 years in federal service.

A graduate of the University of Maine, Mr. Leighton began his career as a civil design engineer at the former Loring AFB, Maine, in 1965.

He held a number of base-level civil engineering positions from 1975 until his assignment to AFCEE in 1992 as technical assistant in what was then the Environmental Conservation and Planning Directorate.

In 2003 Mr. Leighton was named director of the new Major Command and Installation Support-Silver Directorate.

**Roger D. Blevins** of AFCEE's Installation Planning Division, Technical Directorate, retired in June after a federal career that spanned back to 1966 when he enlisted in the Air Force right out of high school in Tampa, Fla.

After the service he attended Florida State University where he obtained a bachelor of science degree in geography in 1974 and a master's degree in land-use planning in 1978.

Mr. Blevins later received a master of public administration degree from the University of North Florida.

Before coming to work for the Air Force, he was a community planner with the U.S. departments of the Interior and Housing and Urban Development in California and Florida, respectively.

In 1981 he became the command community planner with the former Strategic Air Command Headquarters at Offutt AFB, Neb., and then held a similar position with Air Force Materiel Command Headquarters at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Having joined the Naval Reserve in 1978, he was recalled to active duty in 1990 during Operation Desert Storm and served on the U.S. Central Command Forward Intelligence Staff. He again was honorably discharged from the active military in 1991 and continued to serve as a reserve officer until he was transferred to the retired reserve in 1995.

Mr. Blevins was certified as a professional planner by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) in 1990.

In 1992 he arrived at AFCEE where he became program manager for comprehensive planning, serving as the Air Force's nationally recognized expert in that field.

In 30 years of professional planning experience he participated in and managed 45 worldwide planning assistance teams, 15 of which were forward deployments, some in hostile areas.

**Bebe LaBuff**, budget analyst with the Financial Management and Support Directorate's Resources Management Division, retired in June with almost 37 years of government service.

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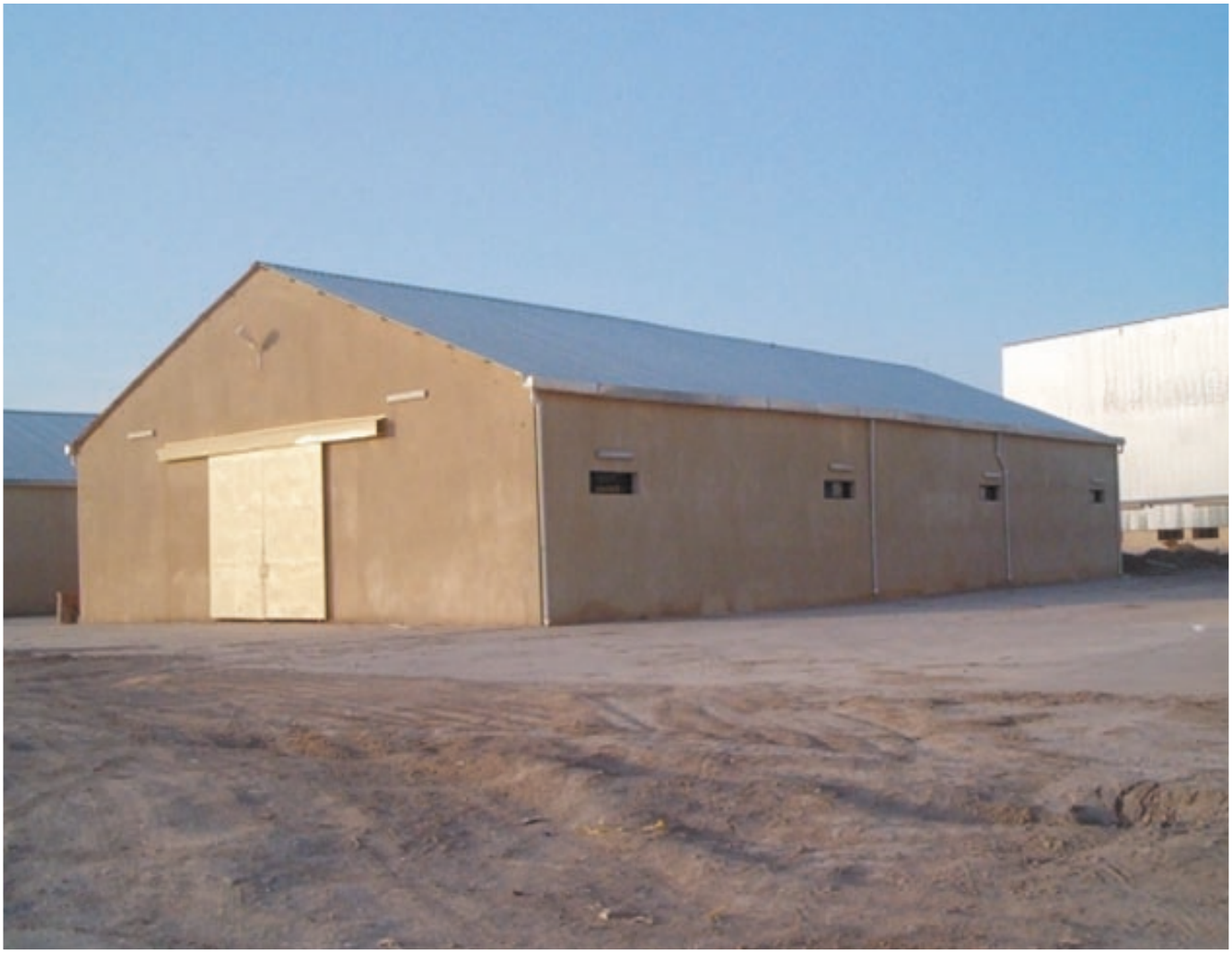

*Rear shot of one of the three buildings recently completed and turned over to Iraqi forces at the Al Muthana Air Base at the Baghdad International Airport. See story and additional photo on page 9.*